



Canadian
Intergovernmental
Conference
Secretariat

Secrétariat
des conférences
intergouvernementales
canadiennes

In Constant Evolution

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO GOVERNMENTS





In our efforts to provide the best service possible and the most up to date information to you, our clients, CICS welcomes your comments and suggestions.

HERE ARE OUR COORDINATES:

General Inquiries

Telephone: 613-995-2341

Fax: 613-996-6091

E-mail: info@scics.ca

Website: www.scics.ca

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 488, Station 'A'

Ottawa, Ontario

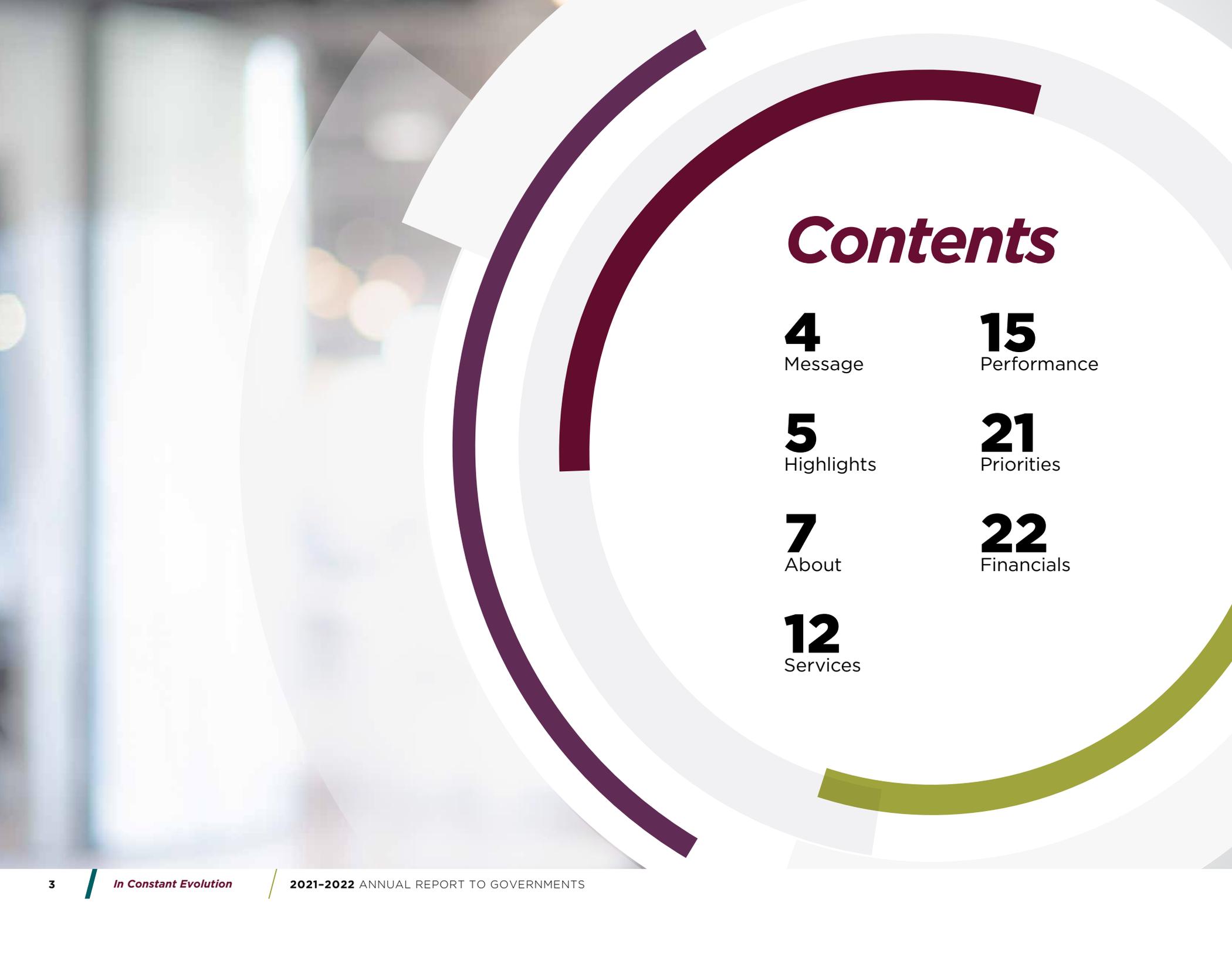
K1N 8V5

Location/Deliveries

222 Queen St., 12th Floor

Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 5V9



Contents

4
Message

15
Performance

5
Highlights

21
Priorities

7
About

22
Financials

12
Services

Message



ANDRÉ M. MCARDLE
SECRETARY

It has been said that conquering adversity makes one stronger, and that has never been truer for the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a service delivery transformation with respect to the agency's mandate of serving senior-level intergovernmental meetings.

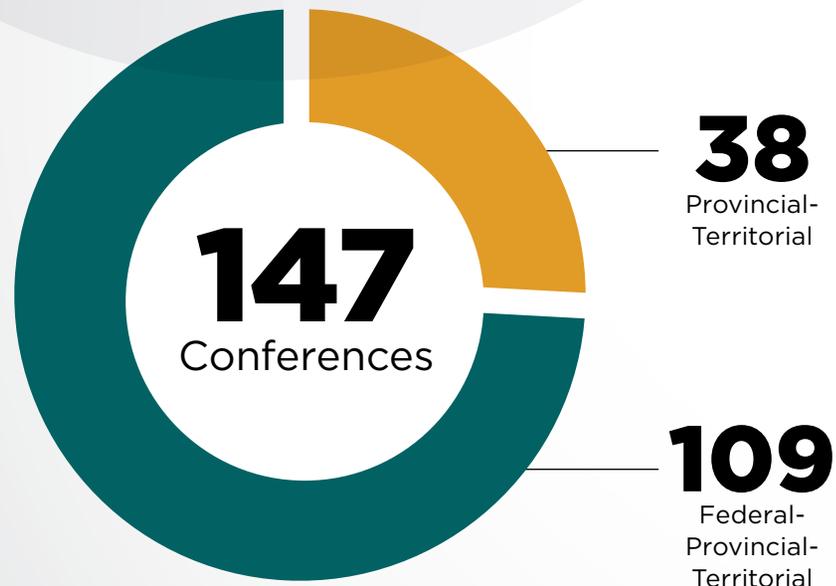
Efficient and innovative collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as Indigenous entities was a key factor in ensuring that the Secretariat remained the first-choice service provider for senior-level intergovernmental meetings across Canada.

In 2021-22, CICS, in addition to continuing to provide services for virtual meetings, began a slow return to the in-person meeting format, once again having to face new challenges. The Secretariat's ability to prepare its clients for this return proved critical given the constant evolution of government policies and regulations pertaining to the pandemic.

CICS personnel demonstrated once again its ability to adjust to this new conference environment. As a result, CICS was able to support 147 senior-level intergovernmental conferences with a participant satisfaction rate of 94%.

Highlights

Overview of intergovernmental conference activity in 2021-22.



3
First Ministers/
Premiers

47
Ministers

79
Deputy Ministers

18
Senior Officials

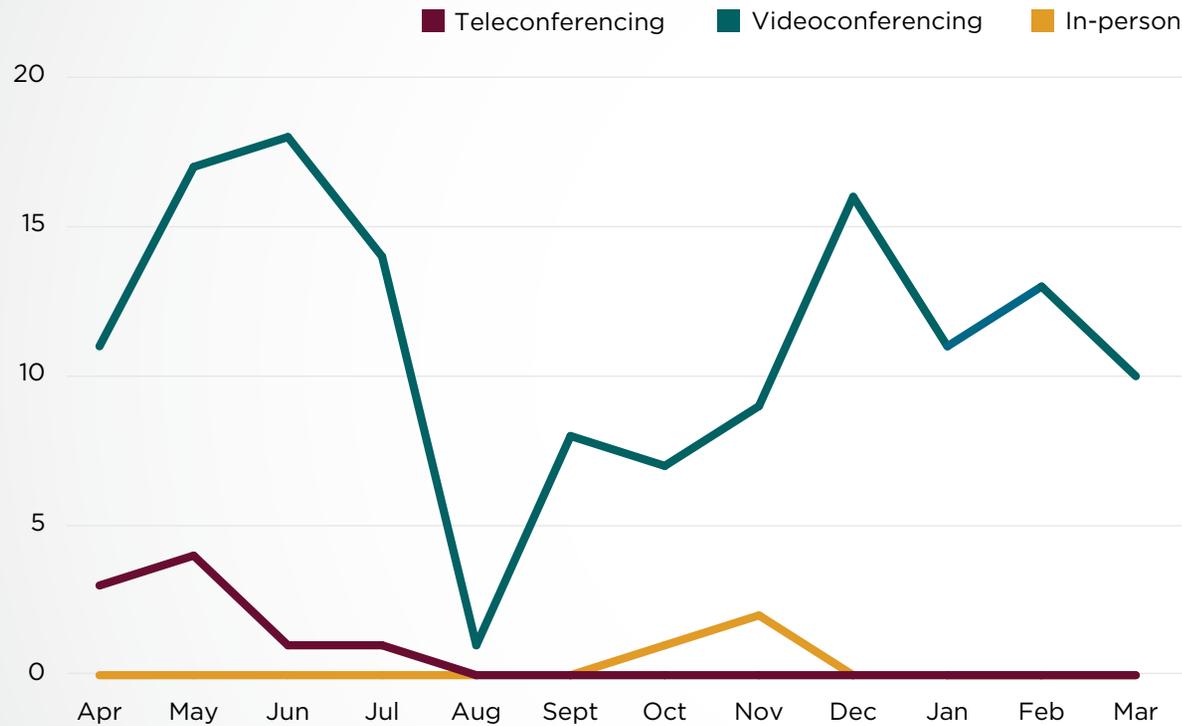
3
In-person

9
Teleconference

135
Videoconference

By Month

Figure 1: The evolution over the months of in-person vs. teleconferences vs. videoconferences in 2021-22.



TOTALS

April 2021: **14**
May 2021: **21**
June 2021: **19**
July 2021: **15**
August 2021: **1**
September 2021: **8**
October 2021: **8**
November 2021: **11**
December 2021: **16**
January 2022: **11**
February 2022: **13**
March 2022: **10**

About

Mandate

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is an impartial agency whose mandate is to provide administrative support and planning services for federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, throughout Canada.

Our primary objective is to relieve client governments and departments of the numerous technical and administrative tasks associated with planning and conducting multilateral conferences, thereby enabling participants to concentrate on substantive intergovernmental policy issues.

The Secretariat's **services** are available to federal, provincial and territorial government departments that are called upon to organize and chair such meetings.

Being truly intergovernmental in nature, the agency is funded by the federal and provincial governments, and its staff is comprised of federal, provincial and territorial public servants.

Mission

We thrive on helping governments by delivering impartial and professional conference services, with innovative solutions.

Vision

Working together to make it happen.

Values

EXCELLENCE

We strive to fulfill the requirements of our mandate through teamwork.

RESPECT

We offer a collegial and rewarding work environment that fosters trust, civility, dignity and fairness.

INTEGRITY

We conduct ourselves in an ethical, honest and transparent manner and with financial probity.



Organizational Structure

Secretary's Office

Serves as the executive office of CICS. Its function is to provide support to the Secretary in his day-to-day activities as the deputy head of the agency.

Information Management and Technology Services

Responsible for information management, information technology and library services to the organization. It also maintains a permanent archive of audio-visual records, documents and a selection of photographs from various conferences served by CICS.

Conference Services

Delivers the agency's core mandate by providing support and advice to the Chair and Co-Chairs with respect to the planning, organizing and the logistics management of senior-level intergovernmental conferences.

Conference Services personnel are a mix of federal, provincial and/or territorial government employees. Additional personnel such as interpreters, translators, technicians and security guards are contracted to join the teams, as required.

Corporate Services

Responsible for the agency's financial, human resources, procurement and security services. This includes providing functional direction and guidance to managers and staff in the delivery of conference services.

Executive Committee

Our executive team is experienced and committed to delivering innovative conference solutions. Working together, they are focused on excellence in client service and achieving value-for-money for all stakeholders.



From left to right: André M. McArdle, Secretary; Véronique Beaumier-Robert, Assistant Secretary; Rodrigue Hurtubise, Director, Conference Services; Mario Giasson, Director, Information Services; Charles Young, Director, Corporate Services.



SPOTLIGHT: CICS welcomed a new Assistant Secretary

In February 2022, Carole Bourget joined CICS as the new Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer. With close to 19 years of experience working in government Finance, including the last 3 years as Deputy Chief Financial Officer at the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Carole will be a key asset to the organization and the streamlining of its processes.

Ms. Bourget holds a Bachelor's degree from Athabasca University, and completed the Senior Executive Advanced Finance and Accounting Program offered via the Office of the Comptroller General of Canada and the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.



SPOTLIGHT: CICS welcomed a new Director of Conference Services

In anticipation of an upcoming retirement, CICS welcomed a new Director of Conference Service in January of 2022, Doumbe Betote Akwa. Doumbe spent the last 12 months working as a Manager and Senior Adviser at the Privy Council Office (PCO), where he contributed significantly to the creation and implementation of PCO's Diversity and Inclusion Program. His 14 years of experience in the federal public service will bring a wealth of expertise and a fresh perspective to the Secretariat.

Having earned a PhD in language sciences and co-authored publications in linguistics, Mr. Betote Akwa also has 10 years of experience in university teaching and research at the Paris X Nanterre University in France, the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi, Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and Dalhousie University in Halifax.

From left to right: Carole Bourget, Assistant Secretary, and Doumbe Betote Akwa, Director, Conference Services.

2021-22 Award Recipient

The Employees' Choice Award is given once a year by a vote of all employees to an individual who exemplifies the criteria of the theme announced. This year's theme was "Creativity, innovation and solidarity in a telework environment". Throughout the year, Megan Timmons promoted innovative solutions, brought people together, and thought outside the box in light of the new working environment. For these reasons, employees voted for her to receive the 2021 Employees' Choice Award.

The Secretary's Award of Excellence is given annually for exceptional contributions made by the agency's employees to the Secretariat's efficient operations. Among the criteria utilized to receive this award are excellence of work on special projects or major initiatives, exemplary behavior and ultimately, the positive results achieved. In 2022, the successful laureate for this award was Megan Timmons.

Representation from the provinces and territories

A number of positions in the Conference Services division are reserved for provincial and territorial (PT) public servants who are seconded to the agency from their respective governments. CICS offers these employees a unique developmental opportunity in the field of intergovernmental affairs. The secondments are usually three-year terms. The presence of our provincial and territorial government colleagues helps ensure that CICS can fulfill its mandate as a neutral intergovernmental body, and also boost the organization's knowledge of provincial and territorial governments. Upon completion of their secondment, the PT employees return to their respective governments enriched with the experience of working with key sectors of intergovernmental activity at the most senior levels.



Employees' Choice Award and
Secretary's Award of Excellence
Winner: Megan Timmons

Services

What we do:

The Secretariat offers logistical and administrative support services for senior-level intergovernmental conferences. We ensure continuity and neutrality in the delivery of conference services, while also offering innovative and resource-efficient solutions.

In addition to our full range of services in support of in-person intergovernmental meetings, detailed on our [Website](#), our teams have worked diligently over the past years (and even more so since the beginning of the pandemic) to become experts in virtual conferencing, in order to support our clients with this alternative format. This has enabled us to offer the following services in support of videoconferences as their popularity grew through 2021-2022:

- Online registration and list of delegates
- Preparation/distribution of a logistics note to participants
- Technical coaching and support for organizers/delegates
- Translation and distribution of documents
- Online access to documents from CICS' secure portal
- Greeting/vetting of participants and presenters
- Remote simultaneous interpretation
- Reservation of a studio and multimedia support
- Recording of discussions
- Archiving of official documents

[Watch video highlighting core services](#)





CICS supported three in-person conferences during the fall of 2021 and gained a better understanding of how to manage social distancing and restrictive health measures in the COVID-19 context. This also provided an opportunity to update some on-site service offerings:

○ **Removal of delegate business center**

- CICS used to set up laptops and printers outside the meeting room for delegates to use independently. This service was rarely used since most delegates travel with their own devices. Printing can still be accessed in the CICS Office.

○ **Limited distribution of office supplies**

- CICS used to place notepads and pens at every seat in the meeting room. These items are still available, however, in order to limit physical handling and touching by multiple individuals, all office supplies will be provided to delegates upon individual request.

○ **Electronic distribution of documents**

- At the last in-person conference, the majority of documents were distributed electronically, with the exception of updated seating plans and the communiqué for the press conference. CICS' online document platform can be used to facilitate the sharing of new and updated documents throughout the event.

○ **Limited printing/photocopying**

- In line with the electronic distribution of documents, printing and photocopying services will only be available upon request.

○ **Remote translation services**

- CICS used to have an on-site translator in a designated office space for Minister-level meetings. With new technology and the widespread adoption of telework during the pandemic, CICS decided it was time to update this service. Translators assigned to conferences will work remotely, saving on room rental fees and travel costs.



Who we serve:

- First Ministers/Premiers
- Ministers
- Deputy Ministers

Most senior-level intergovernmental conferences are supported by our organization. A complete list of our client sectors is available in this report, under [Sectors Served](#).

How to request our services

CICS services are available to any federal, provincial or territorial government department that organizes an intergovernmental meeting of First Ministers, Ministers or Deputy Ministers.

For in-person meetings, the host government is responsible for arrangements and the costs of conference rooms and hospitality; CICS covers the cost of most other conference services. For virtual meetings, most costs are assumed by CICS.

To make your conference as successful as possible, we encourage you to contact us as soon as you start planning it. We recommend a lead time of at least 3 months for in-person/hybrid meetings, and at least 2 months for videoconferences.

We look forward to working with you on your next event!

- Complete and submit our [online request form](#); or
- Contact our Director of Conference Services at 613-222-6411/613-995-4328 or services@scics.ca.

For questions concerning CICS conference archives, please contact info@scics.ca. We will be pleased to help you.

Performance

Key Accomplishments



Completed the digitalization of over **1 million** hard copy records.



Purchased, and started using, state-of-the-art cameras to facilitate **Hybrid Meetings**, giving the remote audience a better experience.



Improved client registration to **Zoom meetings**.



Implemented new software deployment processes to permit **efficient remote deployments**.



Increased employee participation in technological and innovative decisions by hosting semi-annual **“Technology and Innovation Brainstorming sessions”**.



Overview

Conference Activity

In 2021-22, videoconferences accounted for more than 91.8% of our conferences. While teleconferences used to be the preferred alternative to in-person meetings, very few teleconferences are requested now that everyone has become more familiar with videoconferencing software. The last teleconference served by the Secretariat was in July 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only three in-person meetings took place in 2021-22, although this figure was up compared to the previous year as clients were progressively getting back to in-person meetings at the end of the 2021-22 fiscal year.

As a result of innovative measures CICS implemented starting 2020 in the midst of COVID-19, meeting organizers moved from teleconferences to videoconferences, hence the increase of the latter. For the next fiscal year, it is anticipated that the majority of these meetings will use a hybrid format (i.e., in-person meeting with a videoconferencing component).

Client Satisfaction

Two surveys are used to assess client satisfaction, one being an annual sampling of conference organizers and the other one focusing on delegates' perspective. Both provide valuable and very timely feedback on all aspects of the administrative and technical support CICS provides. In turn, this insight informs the Secretariat's decisions about the alignment of its services and approaches with clients' evolving needs and priorities.

Both surveys conducted in 2021-22 showed a very high client satisfaction rate:

- For conference delegates, the satisfaction rate reached 94%, a remarkable achievement given the preliminary return to in-person meetings and new COVID-19 protocols. This satisfaction rate has surpassed the 90% target, likely due to "Best Practices," advice and coaching that CICS provided to meeting chairs, other participants and presenters through the year.
- The rating from conference organizers was 89.7%. Although this result is slightly below the 90% target, it is considered an outstanding success in this fiscal year's transformational context. The slight shortcoming most likely reflects the challenges faced by our clients as they adapted to the new videoconferencing format and platform.

Client Satisfaction Rate

Expected results

Professionally planned and supported conferences, including effectively addressing unforeseen challenges.

Performance indicators

Client (conference organizer) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.

Target
90%

Results
89.7%¹

Expected results

Clients' and conference participants' conference needs identified and addressed accordingly.

Performance indicators

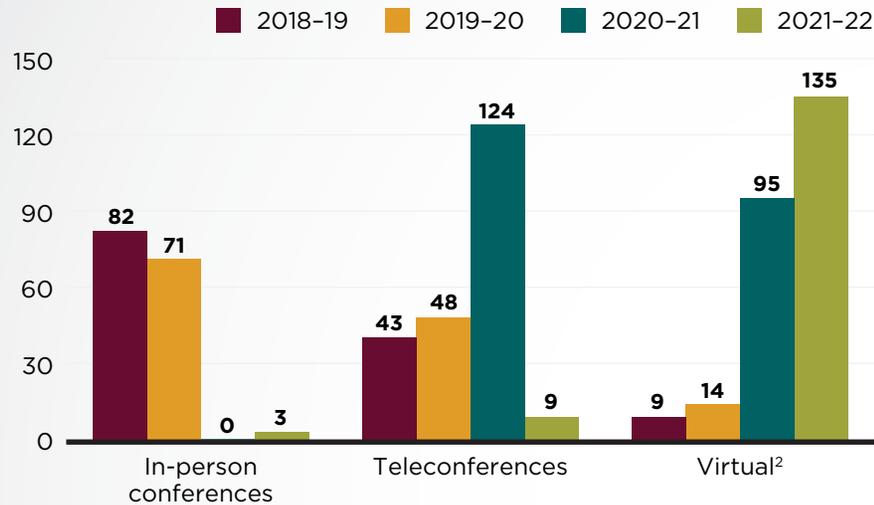
Client (conference participant) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.

Target
90%

Results
94%

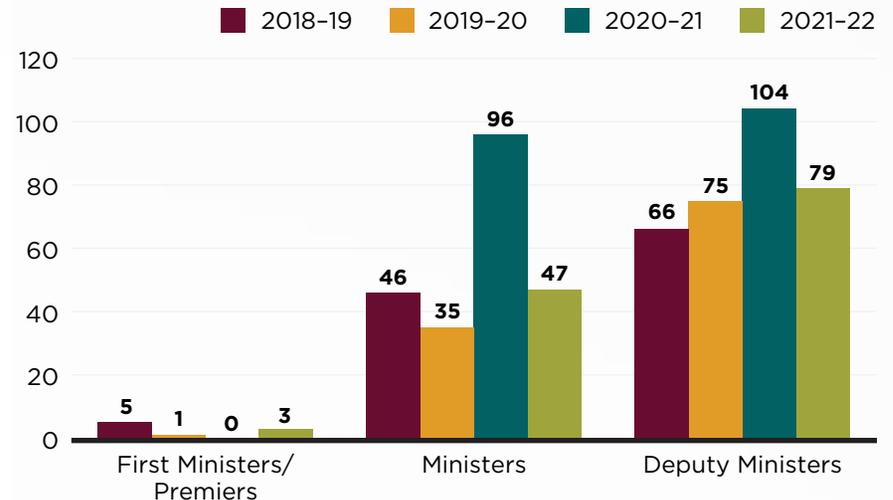
¹ Although this result is slightly below target, it is considered an outstanding success in this fiscal year's transformational context. The slight shortcoming most likely reflects the challenges faced by our clients as they adapted to the new videoconferencing format and platform.

Conferences by Format



Now that clients are becoming proficient with virtual conferencing platforms, the number of teleconference requests are decreasing significantly. CICS expects this trend to continue, with virtual/hybrid conferences likely to be the premier choice in coming years.

Conferences by Level³



For 2021-22, the figures depict a return toward pre-pandemic data.

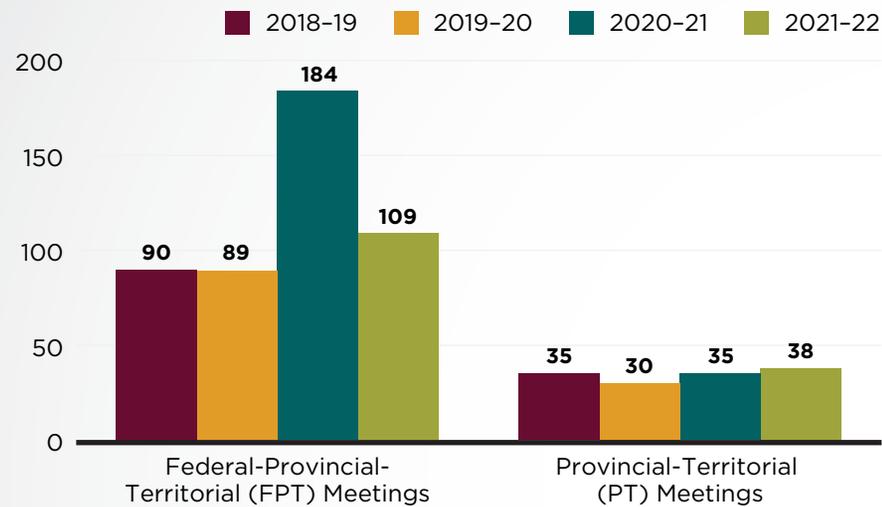
Though there was a 51% and 24% decrease in Minister and Deputy Minister meetings respectively when compared to 2020-21, these 2021-22 numbers are higher than 2019-20 statistics, showing a 134% and 105% increase for Minister and Deputy Minister meetings, respectively.

CICS also saw the highest number of First Minister/Premier level meetings since 2018-19.

² For 2018-19 and 2019-20, figures included hybrid conferences. That includes in-person meetings where either teleconference or videoconference equipment was used to link-in remote participants or presenters. In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the conferences indicated were exclusively virtual, and were all held by videoconference.

³ Figures do not include other levels of conferences.

Conferences by Type



CICS served a total of 109 FPT and 38 PT meetings in 2021-22, compared to a 184/35 ratio in 2020-21. This indicates a 41% decrease in the number of FPT meetings since the previous year, and an increase in the number of PT meetings over the past three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a higher frequency of meetings in order to respond to the worldwide crisis and its impacts. In 2021-22, we are seeing conference numbers move back toward pre-pandemic levels.



Of the **34 sectors** of intergovernmental activity served in 2021-22, the five that convened most often were Status of Women, Justice and Public Safety, Education, Indigenous Affairs, and Tourism. Together, these sectors represented **35%** of all meetings served by CICS.

Sectors	# of conferences
Agriculture	2
Citizenship and Immigration	3
Chief Coroners and Chief Medical Examiners	2
Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates	3
Culture and Heritage	6
Education	8
Emergency Preparedness	3
Energy and Mines	5
Environment	7
Finance	4
Fisheries and Aquaculture	2
Forest	5
Francophonie	2
Housing	1
Indigenous Affairs	8
Information and Privacy Commissioners	1
Intergovernmental Affairs	5

Sectors	# of conferences
Justice and Public Safety	11
Labour	4
Lobbyists Registrars and Commissioners	1
Local Government	4
Official Languages	1
Public Service Commissioners	1
National Association of Public Trustees and Guardians	3
Public Works	2
Seamless Canada	3
Seniors	4
Service Delivery	5
Social Services	5
Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation	4
Status of Women	17
Trade	1
Tourism	8
Transportation	6

Priorities

For 49 years, the Secretariat has been fully committed to delivering high quality, cost-effective conference services to federal, provincial and territorial governments. Our impartiality, commitment to official languages and expertise in service delivery continue to make us the conference service provider of choice for senior-level intergovernmental conferences.

As we look ahead, we want to pilot and implement innovative solutions and technological advancements to improve hybrid meetings. At the center of this is our strong desire to continue to evolve to meet our clients' needs. To achieve this goal, the Secretariat's priorities over the next year will focus on:

- **Maintaining relevance and responsiveness**
- **Efficient use of resources**
- **Continuous innovation**
- **Expanding strategic partnerships**



Financials

Provincial Contributions

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is financed by both the Government of Canada through parliamentary appropriations and by the provinces through contributions under a shared cost agreement. The amount of \$2.35 million requested from the provinces last fall, for the 2021–22 budget, was calculated by taking the difference between CICS' Main Estimates of \$5.96 million and the federal government contribution⁴ of \$3.51 million and adjusting it on the basis of the 2020–21 lapse.

⁴ The Federal share includes fifty percent of the total budget plus the employee benefit plans for federal, provincial and territorial employees, the translation costs, the tenant services, the capital costs and any revenue shortfalls resulting from the non-payment or partial payment by the provinces of their respective share.

The total provincial share of the CICS budget is then split among the provinces on a pro rata basis, according to their population, as determined by the 2016 Population Census. Table 1 shows the provinces' shares for the 2021-22 budget, as well as the actual amounts received.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS CICS' 2021-22 BUDGET (\$ THOUSANDS)

Province	% based on 2016 Population Census	Distribution of Provincial Share of CICS' 2021-22 Budget	Distribution of Provincial Share of the Adjustment ⁵	2021-22 Requested Contribution	2021-22 Actual Contribution Received
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.5%	36.7	6.5	30.2	30.2
Nova Scotia	2.6%	63.7	11.6	52.1	52.1
New Brunswick	2.1%	51.4	9.4	42.0	42.0
Prince Edward Island	0.4%	9.8	1.8	8.0	8.0
Quebec	23.3%	570.5	-	570.5	131.3
Ontario	38.4%	940.2	-	940.2	265.0
Manitoba	3.7%	90.5	16.1	74.4	74.4
Saskatchewan	3.1%	75.9	-	75.9	23.0
Alberta	11.6%	284.0	51.2	232.8	232.8
British Columbia	13.3%	325.7	-	325.7	95.0
Total	100%	2,448.4	96.6	2,351.8	953.8

⁵ The 2021-22 Budget adjustment represents the difference calculated from the Main Estimate less actual expenditures. The provincial share of the budget adjustment is distributed between provinces which fully contributed towards CICS' operational budget.

Financial Results

A summary of CICS's financial results are presented in Table 2. The total funding is composed of the Main Estimates budget and adjustments. The Main Estimates are the voted appropriations at the beginning of the fiscal year, which started on April 1, 2021. Total funding for CICS has not varied significantly compared with the previous year.

TABLE 2. 2021-22 FINANCIAL RESULTS (\$ THOUSANDS)

CICS Budget	2021-22	2020-21
Main Estimates	6,030.5	5,956.0
Adjustments & Transfers	228.3	366.3
Total Funding	6,258.8	6,322.3

CICS Expenditures	2021-22	2020-21
Salaries & Wages	2,631.0	2,631.7
Employee Benefit Plans	355.3	379.7
Sub-total—Personnel Costs	2,986.3	3,011.4
Other Operating Costs	1,907.5	1,653.8
Capital Costs	0	0
Sub-total—Other Operating & Capital Costs	1,907.5	1,653.8
Total Expenditures	4,893.8	4,665.2
Lapsed (over expended)	1,365.0	1,657.1



Total spending for 2021-22 is slightly higher when compared with 2020-21, and mainly due to a project to digitize files. These costs are significantly lower than two years prior due to the continued use of a mainly virtual format in light of the pandemic. The variance between the 2020-21 and 2021-22 total expenditures is approximately \$229 thousand (5%).

It is important to note that CICS does not convene intergovernmental meetings. It is called upon to respond to decisions taken by governments to meet on key national or specific issues. Decisions concerning the location and format of such meetings, their number in a given fiscal year, their timing and duration, are all factors beyond the control of the Secretariat. The level of CICS expenditures for each fiscal year is, however, directly affected by these factors. CICS does exercise due care and probity in the expenditure of its funds to meet its mandate, planning for variances for both conference volume, support level and format to ensure continued operation within its available budget.

As illustrated in this report, fiscal year 2021-22 continued to be impacted by the pandemic, resulting in only three in-person meetings, which are traditionally more costly due to travel, overtime, and AV requirements. Another important consideration is the ratio of teleconferences to videoconferences. In 2020-21, the Secretariat served a 124/95 ratio respectively, and in 2021-22 that became 9/135. Teleconferences require significantly fewer resources than videoconferences therefore a higher volume of the latter drastically increases the overall conference costs.